

## **REMARKS**

This Reply and Amendment is intended to be fully responsive to the Office Action dated December 5, 2002. Claims 57-76 were pending in the Application. Claims 57-67 and 69-76 stand rejected. Claims 70 and 74 have been amended. Claims 77-82 have been added. Claims 57-82 are now pending in this Application.

### **Information Disclosure Statement**

On Page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner stated:

The I.D.S. filed 2-18-02 cites two references, U.S. Patent No. 5,537,290 and a publication entitled "BlueSpace". The "BlueSpace" reference has not been considered because the pages are stuck together so that Examiner cannot adequately review the document.

The Applicants are uncertain how or why the "BlueSpace reference" materials disclosed on February 18, 2002 became damaged. In any event, the "BlueSpace reference" has been resubmitted for consideration (with protective sheets separating the color sheets and in duplicate non-color form).

On Page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner stated:

The I.D.S. filed 5/24/02 does not provide copies of the references. Examiner considered all the U.S. patent references because they are readily available. However, the foreign references have not been considered because they are not readily available. This application claims priority from copending U.S. Application 09/183,023. Examiner attempted to obtain a copy of U.S. Application 09/183,023 hoping the foreign references would also be cited in that case's I.D.S. However, Examiner was unable to obtain the file. Upon submission of Applicant's response, Examiner will again attempt to obtain file 09/183,023 to review the foreign references. Applicant is also invited to provide copies of the foreign references to ensure they are considered.

The foreign references have been submitted for consideration.

**Claim Objections**

On Page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner objected to Claim 75 because of an asserted informality: a. "It appears that 'is' should be inserted between 'beam' and 'positioned.'"

Claim 75 has been amended to address the informality identified by the Examiner by inserting "is" between "beam" and "positioned." The Applicants believe that this amendment has overcome the objection to Claim 75.

**Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102**

On Pages 3-5 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 57-60 and 67 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,076,317 titled "Lightweight Bridge for Office Paneling Systems" filed on April 28, 1997 and issued on June 20, 2000 to Hellwig et al. ("Hellwig et al. '317").

The Examiner stated that Hellwig et al. '317 discloses:

[I]n figures 1-3 and in column 1, line 1 to column 5, line 54, a frame based office panel in combination with bridge arrangements for defining a work station. Column 2, line 65 to column 3, line 16, discloses a series of office panels 4 connected in an end to end manner forming a spline 5 to which bridge arrangements 6 or other office panels can extend in a perpendicular or angled manner. The bridge arrangements 6 extend at an angle from the spline 5 and define a series of work stations. The bridge arrangements 6 can be connected to an office panel 4 at any point along the length of the office panel. Column 3, lines 39-41 disclose the bridge arrangement 6 including an extension or floor engaging column member 50 at the free end of the rectangular partition 30. Column 4, line 53 to column 5, line 12, discloses a wiring trough 100 secured to the lower edge of the bridge member 6 for receiving the communication or electrical wiring generally indicated as 104 in Fig. 5. This facilitates a normal electrical connection with a receptacle of the office panel 6 either interior to the office panel, or along an appropriate surface thereof. The wiring for the equipment supported on work surface 9 is placed in the casual wiring trough 100 attached to a bridge 6. The spline 5 of office panels 4 is interpreted as the claimed furniture, the bridge

arrangement 6 is interpreted as the claimed utility beam movably attached to the office panels 4, the floor engaging column member 50 is interpreted as the claimed utility access extension, and the cavities formed by the members 60, 62 are interpreted as utility delivery zones. Because the trough 100 extends for the length of the bridge 6 from the panels 4 to the member 50 it is configured to supply utilities to the utility delivery zone.

Claim 57 is in independent form and recites a “system for distributing utilities away from furniture elements carrying the utilities” comprising, in combination with other elements, an “overhead utility beam moveably attached proximate one end to the furniture” (emphasis added). Claims 58-60 and 67 depend from independent Claim 57.

Hellwig et al. '317 is directed to a “lightweight bridge for office paneling systems” having a “series of office panels 4 . . . connected in an end to end manner forming a spline to which bridge arrangement 6 or other office panels can extend in a perpendicular or angled manner” (see col. 2, line 65 to col. 3, line 1). The “bridge arrangement 6 provides visual privacy between two work stations, but does leave a gap, generally shown as 13, between a lower edge of the bridge arrangement and the floor” (see col. 3, lines 17-20; Figure 1). The “top of the bridge arrangement is positioned at the same height as the office panels 4 or at least at predetermined heights thereof (typically as a function of the elements)” (see col. 3, lines 20-23).

Hellwig et al. '317 does not identically disclose a “system for distributing utilities away from furniture elements carrying the utilities” comprising in combination with other elements, an “overhead utility beam moveably attached proximate one end to the furniture” (emphasis added) recited in independent Claim 57. The rejection of Claim 57 over Hellwig et al. '317 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) is improper. Claim 57 is patentable over Hellwig et al. '317.

Dependent Claims 58-60 and 67, which depend from independent Claim 57, are also patentable. See 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 4.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of independent Claim 57 and corresponding dependent Claims 58-60 and 67 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

**Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)**

**A. Independent Claim 57**

On Pages 5-7 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 61-68 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hellwig et al. '317 in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,675,946 issued on October 14, 1997 to Verbeek et al. ("Verbeek et al.") and U.S. Patent No. 4,180,298 issued on December 25, 1979 to Borgerson, Jr. ("Borgerson"). On Pages 6-7 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claim 67 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hellwig et al. '317 (a single reference).

The Examiner stated that Hellwig et al. '317 discloses:

[I]n figures 1-3 and in column 1, line 1 to column 5, line 54, a frame based office panel in combination with bridge arrangements for defining a work station. Column 2, line 65 to column 3, line 16 discloses a series of office panels 4 connected in an end to end manner forming a spline 5 to which bridge arrangements 6 or other office panels can extend in a perpendicular or angled manner. The bridge arrangements 6 extend at an angle from the spline 5 and define a series of work stations. The bridge arrangements 6 can be connected to an office panel 4 at any point along the length of the office panel. Column 3, lines 39-41 disclose the bridge arrangement 6 including an extension or floor engaging column member 50 at the free end of the rectangular partition 30. Column 4, line 53 to column 5, line 12, discloses a wiring trough 100 secured to the lower edge of the bridge member 6 for receiving the communication or electrical wiring generally indicated as 104 in Fig. 5. This facilitates a normal electrical connection with a receptacle of the office panel 6 either interior to the office panel, or along an appropriate surface thereof. The wiring for the equipment supported on work surface 9 is placed in the casual wiring trough 100 attached to a bridge 6. The spline 5 of office panels 4 is interpreted as the claimed furniture, the bridge arrangement 6 is interpreted as the claimed utility beam movably attached to the office panels 4, the floor engaging column member 50 is interpreted as the claimed utility access extension, and the cavities formed by the members 60, 62 are interpreted as

utility delivery zones. Because the trough 100 extends for the length of the bridge 6 from the panels 4 to the member 50 it is configured to supply utilities to the utility delivery zone.

However, the Examiner acknowledged that Hellwig et al. '317 does not disclose "the bridge 6 being configured for sliding movement along the spline 5 and the member 50 configured for rolling movement." The Examiner also acknowledged that Hellwig et al. '317 does not disclose "the bridge 6 and the member 50 connected to form an L-shape."

The Examiner stated that Verbeek et al. discloses:

[I]n figures 1-6 and in column 2, lines 46-57, a privacy screen 10 slidably connected to a panel 4. [Verbeek et al.] also discloses a cover 72 having outer slide 60 fixed thereto. The cover 72 and outer slide 60 are considered to be a horizontal rail mounted on the panel 5 and the other slides (i.e., the inner slide 56, and the intermediate slide 58) engage the outer slide 60. The inter-related slides 56, 58, 60 are interpreted as constituting a track"

The Examiner also stated that Borgerson discloses:

[I]n figures 1 and 2, a cabinet 10 supported on a track horizontally mounted on a wall 12 and the cabinet 10 having casters 29, 30. The casters 29, 30 are vertically adjustable as disclosed in column 3, lines 40-42.

The Examiner further stated that "it is well-known to one of ordinary skill in the art to connect panels with each other to form various configurations."

The Examiner stated that he

considers it obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the bridge arrangement 6 of Hellwig so that it is configured for sliding movement along the spline 5 and to modify the member 50 to have vertically adjustable casters. One of ordinary skill would modify the bridge arrangement 6 to slide along the spline 5 to provide a simple method to move the bridge arrangement along the spline 5. One of ordinary skill would modify the member 50 to have vertically adjustable casters to easily roll the member 50 on a floor. The casters would then be vertically shortened and the height adjustable glides 56 could be vertically adjusted to support the member 50.

The Examiner stated that he

considers it obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to form the bridge 6 and member 50 in the form of an L-shape, as a matter of design choice. One of ordinary skill in the art would be motivated to modify Hellwig to make a bridge arrangement better suited to constructing exterior corners of office workstations.

Claim 57 is in independent form and recites a “system for distributing utilities away from furniture elements carrying the utilities” comprising, in combination with other elements, an “overhead utility beam moveably attached proximate one end to the furniture” (emphasis added). Claims 61-68 depend from independent Claim 57.

Hellwig et al. '317 is directed to a “lightweight bridge for office paneling systems” having a “series of office panels 4 . . . connected in an end to end manner forming a spline to which bridge arrangement 6 or other office panels can extend in a perpendicular or angled manner” (see col. 2, line 65 to col. 3, line 1). The “bridge arrangement 6 provides visual privacy between two work stations, but does leave a gap, generally shown as 13, between a lower edge of the bridge arrangement and the floor” (see col. 3, lines 17-20; Figure 1). The “top of the bridge arrangement is positioned at the same height as the office panels 4 or at least at predetermined heights thereof (typically as a function of the elements)” (see col. 3, lines 20-23).

Verbeek et al. is directed to a “privacy screen for office paneling systems.” “The privacy screen 10 is moveable from the open position of FIG. 1 to the closed position of FIG. 2 where the workstation [9] is isolated from the hallway [11]” (see col. 2, lines 41-49).

Borgerson is directed to a “relocatable furniture system” including “caster mounted cabinets [that] may be rolled into engagement with a wall mounted support rail . . .” (see Abstract).

The “system for distributing utilities away from furniture elements carrying the utilities” recited in independent Claim 57 would not have been obvious in view of Hellwig et al. '317, alone or in any proper combination with Verbeek et al. and/or Borgerson, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Hellwig et al. '317, alone or in any proper combination with Verbeek et al. and/or Borgerson, does not disclose, teach or suggest a “system for distributing utilities away from furniture elements carrying the utilities” comprising, in combination with other elements, an “overhead utility beam moveably attached proximate one end to the furniture” (emphasis added). To transform “privacy screen for office paneling systems” of Hellwig et al. '317, the “privacy screen for office paneling systems” of Verbeek et al. and the “relocatable furniture system” of Borgerson into a “system for distributing utilities away from furniture elements carrying the utilities” (as recited in Claim 57) would require still further modification, and such modification is taught only by Applicants’ own disclosure. The suggestion to make the combination of Hellwig et al. '317, Verbeek et al., and Borgerson has been taken from Applicants’ own specification (using hindsight) which is improper.

The “system for distributing utilities away from furniture elements carrying the utilities” recited in independent Claim 57 would not have been obvious in view of Hellwig et al. '317, Verbeek et al., and Borgerson. The rejection of Claim 57 over Hellwig et al. '317, alone or in any proper combination with Verbeek et al. and/or Borgerson, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is improper. Claim 57 is patentable over Hellwig et al. '317, alone or in any proper combination with Verbeek et al. and/or Borgerson.

Dependent Claims 61-67, which depend from independent Claim 57, are also patentable. See 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 4.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 57 and 61-67 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

**B. Independent Claim 70**

On Page 7 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 70-73 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hellwig et al. '317 in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,241,796 issued on September 7, 1993 to John Hellwig and Lorie Marangoni ("Hellwig et al. '796").

The Examiner stated that Hellwig et al. '317 discloses:

[I]n figures 1-3 and in column 1, line 1 to column 5, line 54, a frame based office panel in combination with bridge arrangements for defining a work station. Column 2, line 65 to column 3, line 16 discloses a series of office panels 4 connected in an end to end manner forming a spline 5 to which bridge arrangements 6 or other office panels can extend in a perpendicular or angled manner. The bridge arrangements 6 extend at an angle from the spline 5 and define a series of work stations. The bridge arrangements 6 can be connected to an office panel 4 at any point along the length of the office panel. Column 3, lines 39-41 disclose the bridge arrangement 6 including an extension or floor engaging column member 50 at the free end of the rectangular partition 30. Column 4, line 53 to column 5, line 12, discloses a wiring trough 100 secured to the lower edge of the bridge member 6 for receiving the communication or electrical wiring generally indicated as 104 in Fig. 5. This facilitates a normal electrical connection with a receptacle of the office panel 6 either interior to the office panel, or along an appropriate surface thereof. The wiring for the equipment supported on work surface 9 is placed in the casual wiring trough 100 attached to a bridge 6. The spline 5 of office panels 4 is interpreted as the claimed furniture, the bridge arrangement 6 is interpreted as the claimed utility beam movably attached to the office panels 4, the floor engaging column member 50 is interpreted as the claimed utility access extension, and the cavities formed by the members 60, 62 are interpreted as utility delivery zones. Because the trough 100 extends for the length of the bridge 6 from the panels 4 to the member 50 it is configured to supply utilities to the utility delivery zone.

However, the Examiner acknowledged that Hellwig et al. '317 "does not disclose mounting a light fixture on the bridge 6."

The Examiner stated that Hellwig et al. '796 discloses:



[I]n figure 1 and in column 4, lines 4-7, mounting a light on a panel, and the light having a shade. The light is interpreted as a light fixture and the shade as a small canopy.

The Examiner stated that he

considers it obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to mount a light having a shade on the bridge 6 of [Hellwig et al. '317].

Claim 70 (as amended) is in independent form and recites a “floor supported system for distributing utilities away from furniture elements carrying the utilities” comprising, in combination with other elements, an “overhead utility beam moveably attached proximate one end to the furniture configured to supply utilities to the utility delivery zone so that users may gain access to utilities routed through the furniture at a point away from the furniture” (emphasis added). Claims 71-73 depend from independent Claim 70.

Hellwig et al. '317 is directed to a “lightweight bridge for office paneling systems” having a “series of office panels 4 . . . connected in an end to end manner forming a spline to which bridge arrangement 6 or other office panels can extend in a perpendicular or angled manner” (see col. 2, line 65 to col. 3, line 1). The “bridge arrangement 6 provides visual privacy between two work stations, but does leave a gap, generally shown as 13, between a lower edge of the bridge arrangement and the floor” (see col. 3, lines 17-20; Figure 1). The “top of the bridge arrangement is positioned at the same height as the office panels 4 or at least at predetermined heights thereof (typically as a function of the elements)” (see col. 3, lines 20-23).

Hellwig et al. '796 is directed to a “securing blanket.” “A first series of office panels 2 are shown in FIG. 1 with a second series of office panels indicated as 4. The second series forms a generally perpendicular junction with the first series of connected office panels 2. Securing brackets 20 are shown in FIG. 1 maintaining the particular desired orientation of the connected first series of office panels 2 and the connected second series of office panels 4.

The series of connected office panels are each made up of individual office panels 6. Each office panel 6 has a number of horizontal slots shown as 8 which are visible and actually form part of the frame that is behind the decorative elements 12” (see col. 2, lines 36-47).

The “floor supported system for distributing utilities away from furniture elements carrying the utilities” recited in independent Claim 70 (as amended) would not have been obvious in view of Hellwig et al. '317, alone or in any proper combination with Hellwig et al. '796, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Hellwig et al. '317, alone or in any proper combination with Hellwig et al. '796, does not disclose, teach or suggest a “floor supported system for distributing utilities away from furniture elements carrying the utilities” comprising, in combination with other elements, an “overhead utility beam moveably attached proximate one end to the furniture configured to supply utilities to the utility delivery zone so that users may gain access to utilities routed through the furniture at a point away from the furniture” (emphasis added). To transform the “lightweight bridge for office paneling systems” of Hellwig et al. '317 and the “securing blanket” of Hellwig et al. '796 into a “floor supported system for distributing utilities away from furniture elements carrying the utilities” (as recited in Claim 70, as amended) would require still further modification, and such modification is taught only by Applicants’ own disclosure. The suggestion to make the combination of Hellwig et al. '317 and Hellwig et al. '796 has been taken from Applicants’ own specification (using hindsight) which is improper.

The “floor supported system for distributing utilities away from furniture elements carrying the utilities” recited in independent Claim 70 (as amended), considered as a whole, would not have been obvious in view of Hellwig et al. '317 and Hellwig et al. '796. The rejection of Claim 70 over Hellwig et al. '317, alone or in any proper combination with Hellwig et al. '796, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is improper. Claim 70 (as amended) is patentable over Hellwig et al. '317, alone or in combination with Hellwig et al. '796.

Dependent Claims 71-73, which depend from independent Claim 70, are also patentable. See 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 4.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 70-73 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

**C. Independent Claim 74**

On Page 7 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 74 and 75 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hellwig et al. '317 in view of Hellwig et al. '796. On page 7 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claim 76 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hellwig et al. '317, Hellwig et al. '796, and Verbeek et al.

The Examiner stated that Hellwig et al. '317 discloses:

[I]n figures 1-3 and in column 1, line 1 to column 5, line 54, a frame based office panel in combination with bridge arrangements for defining a work station. Column 2, line 65 to column 3, line 16 discloses a series of office panels 4 connected in an end to end manner forming a spline 5 to which bridge arrangements 6 or other office panels can extend in a perpendicular or angled manner. The bridge arrangements 6 extend at an angle from the spline 5 and define a series of work stations. The bridge arrangements 6 can be connected to an office panel 4 at any point along the length of the office panel. Column 3, lines 39-41 disclose the bridge arrangement 6 including an extension or floor engaging column member 50 at the free end of the rectangular partition 30. Column 4, line 53 to column 5, line 12, discloses a wiring trough 100 secured to the lower edge of the bridge member 6 for receiving the communication or electrical wiring generally indicated as 104 in Fig. 5. This facilitates a normal electrical connection with a receptacle of the office panel 6 either interior to the office panel, or along an appropriate surface thereof. The wiring for the equipment supported on work surface 9 is placed in the casual wiring trough 100 attached to a bridge 6. The spline 5 of office panels 4 is interpreted as the claimed furniture, the bridge arrangement 6 is interpreted as the claimed utility beam movably attached to the office panels 4, the floor engaging column member 50 is interpreted as the claimed utility access extension, and the cavities formed by the members 60, 62 are interpreted as utility delivery zones. Because the trough 100 extends for the

length of the bridge 6 from the panels 4 to the member 50 it is configured to supply utilities to the utility delivery zone.

The Examiner stated that Verbeek discloses:

[I]n figures 1-6 and in column 2, lines 46-57, a privacy screen 10 slidably connected to a panel 4. Verbeek also discloses a cover 72 having outer slide 60 fixed thereto. The cover 72 and outer slide 60 are considered to be a horizontal rail mounted on the panel 5 and the other slides (i.e., the inner slide 56, and the intermediate slide 58) engage the outer slide 60. The inter-related slides 56, 58, 60 are interpreted as constituting a track.

The Examiner stated that Hellwig et al. '796 discloses:

[I]n figure 1 and in column 4, lines 4-7, mounting a light on a panel, and the light having a shade. The light is interpreted as a light fixture and the shade as a small canopy.

The Examiner stated that he

considers it obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to mount a light having a shade on the bridge 6 of [Hellwig et al. '317]. . . . [and] to modify [Hellwig et al. '317] to include a predefined path defined by a rail to selectively deliver utilities to at least one portion of a work area.

Claim 74 (as amended) is in independent form and recites a “wall supported system for distributing utilities away from furniture elements carrying the utilities” comprising, in combination with other elements, an “overhead utility beam moveably attached proximate one end to the furniture configured to supply utilities to the utility delivery zone so that users may gain access to utilities routed through the furniture at a point away from the furniture” (emphasis added). Claims 75 and 76 depends from independent Claim 74.

Hellwig et al. '317 is directed to a “lightweight bridge for office paneling systems” having a “series of office panels 4 . . . connected in an end to end manner forming a spline to which bridge arrangement 6 or other office panels can extend in a perpendicular or angled manner” (see col. 2, line 65 to col. 3, line 1). The “bridge arrangement 6 provides visual privacy between two work stations, but does leave a gap, generally shown as 13, between a lower edge

of the bridge arrangement and the floor” (see col. 3, lines 17-20; Figure 1). The “top of the bridge arrangement is positioned at the same height as the office panels 4 or at least at predetermined heights thereof (typically as a function of the elements)” (see col. 3, lines 20-23).

Hellwig et al. '796 is directed to a “securing blanket.” “A first series of office panels 2 are shown in FIG. 1 with a second series of office panels indicated as 4. The second series forms a generally perpendicular junction with the first series of connected office panels 2. Securing brackets 20 are shown in FIG. 1 maintaining the particular desired orientation of the connected first series of office panels 2 and the connected second series of office panels 4. The series of connected office panels are each made up of individual office panels 6. Each office panel 6 has a number of horizontal slots shown as 8 which are visible and actually form part of the frame that is behind the decorative elements 12.” (See col. 2, lines 36-47.)

Verbeek et al. is directed to a “privacy screen for office paneling systems.” “The privacy screen 10 is moveable from the open position of FIG. 1 to the closed position of FIG. 2 where the workstation [9] is isolated from the hallway [11]” (see col. 2, lines 41-49).

The elements recited in independent Claim 74 (as amended) would not have been obvious in view of Hellwig et al. '317, alone or in any proper combination with Hellwig et al. '796 and/or Verbeek et al., under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Hellwig et al. '317, alone or in any proper combination with Hellwig et al. '796 and/or Verbeek et al., does not disclose, teach or suggest a “wall supported system for distributing utilities away from furniture elements carrying the utilities” comprising, in combination with other elements, an “overhead utility beam moveably attached proximate one end to the furniture configured to supply utilities to the utility delivery zone so that users may gain access to utilities routed through the furniture at a point away from the furniture” (emphasis added). To transform the “lightweight bridge for office paneling systems” of Hellwig et al. '317, the “securing blanket” of Hellwig et al. '796, and the “privacy screen for office

paneling systems” of Verbeek et al. into a “wall supported system for distributing utilities away from furniture elements carrying the utilities” (as recited in Claim 74, as amended) would require still further modification, and such modification is taught only by Applicants’ own disclosure. The suggestion to make the combination of Hellwig et al. ‘317, Hellwig et al. ‘796, and Verbeek et al. has been taken from Applicants’ own specification (using hindsight) which is improper.

The elements recited in independent Claim 74 (as amended), considered as a whole, would not have been obvious in view of Hellwig et al. ‘317, Hellwig et al. ‘796, and Verbeek et al. The rejection of Claim 74 (as amended) over Hellwig et al. ‘317, alone or in any proper combination with Hellwig et al. ‘796, and/or Verbeek et al., under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is improper. Claim 74 (as amended) is patentable over Hellwig et al. ‘317, alone or in any proper combination with Hellwig et al. ‘796, and/or Verbeek et al.

Dependent Claims 75 and 76, which depend from independent Claim 74, are also patentable. See 35 U.S.C. § 112 ¶ 4.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 74-76 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

#### **New Claims**

Dependent Claims 77-82 have been added. Claims 77 and 78 depend from independent Claim 57. Claim 79 and 80 depend from independent Claim 70. Claim 81 and 82 depend from independent Claim 74.

No new matter has been added.

**Allowable Subject Matter**

The Examiner provided the following statement of reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter in Claim 68:

The prior art does not disclose, and it does not appear obvious to modify the prior art to disclose, a utility distribution system having the structural limitations of claim 57 and also having a retractable partition.

While the Applicants agree that Claim 68 recites a combination of subject matter that is patentable over the cited references, the Applicants do not necessarily agree with or acquiesce in the statement of reasons for allowance given by the Examiner. Moreover, the Applicants note that the recited subject matter as well as various other subject matter and/or combinations of subject matter may be patentable for other reasons than those given by the Examiner. The Applicants expressly reserve the right to set forth additional and/or alternative reasons for patentability and/or allowance in connection with the present Application or in any other future proceeding.

\* \* \*

The Applicants respectfully submit that each and every outstanding objection and rejection has been overcome, and the present Application is in a condition for allowance. The Applicants request reconsideration and allowance of pending Claims 57-82.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

Date 3/5/03

By Scott D. Anderson

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70. (Amended Once) A floor supported system for distributing utilities away from furniture elements carrying the utilities, comprising:

a utility delivery zone;

an overhead utility beam moveably attached proximate one end to the furniture configured to supply utilities to the utility delivery zone so that users may gain access to utilities routed through the furniture at a point away from the furniture; and

a light fixture coupled to the beam.

74. (Amended Once) A wall supported system for distributing utilities away from furniture elements carrying the utilities, comprising:

a utility delivery zone;

an overhead utility beam moveably attached proximate one end to the furniture configured to supply utilities to the utility delivery zone so that users may gain access to utilities routed through the furniture at a point away from the furniture; and

a light fixture coupled to the beam.

75. (Amended Once) The system of Claim 74 wherein the beam is positioned at an elevation above the furniture.

APPENDIX A

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE TO THE CLAIMS

APPLICATION No. 10/026,964

ATTY. DKT. NO.: 076507-0421

B1 ~~Sub 70.~~ (Amended Once) A floor supported system for distributing utilities away from furniture elements carrying the utilities, comprising:

a utility delivery zone;

an overhead utility beam moveably attached proximate one end to the furniture configured to supply utilities to the utility delivery zone so that users may gain access to utilities routed through the furniture at a point away from the furniture; and

a light fixture [mounted on] coupled to the beam.

B2 ~~Sub 74.~~ (Amended Once) A wall supported system for distributing utilities away from furniture elements carrying the utilities, comprising:

a utility delivery zone,

an overhead utility beam moveably attached proximate one end to the furniture configured to supply utilities to the utility delivery zone so that users may gain access to utilities routed through the furniture at a point away from the furniture; and

a light fixture [mounted on] coupled to the beam.

75. (Amended Once) The system of Claim 74 wherein the beam is positioned at an elevation above the furniture.